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Agenda item 12

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Written statement submitted by Women's International Democratic Federation, World Confederation of Labour, World Federation of Trade Unions and World Muslim Congress, non-governmental organizations in consultative status (category I); American Association of Jurists, Arab Lawyers Union, General Arab Women Federation, International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, International Indian Treaty Council, International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees, Service, Peace and Justice in Latin America, Union of Arab Jurists, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and World Young Women's Christian Association, non-governmental organizations in consultative status (category II); Centre Europe Tiers-Monde, Indian Council of South America, International Educational Development, Inc., International Peace Bureau, International Progress Organization, Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples, World Christian Life Community, World Peace Council and World Social Prospects Association, non-governmental organizations on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is distributed in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[2 March 1993]

Appeal from the non-governmental organizations to the Commission on Human Rights on the humanitarian situation in Iraq

1. Recalling decision 1992/106 of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of 27 August 1992 which states that the Sub-Commission "is deeply concerned about the serious consequences which the embargo imposed on Iraq for the past two years is having on the entire civilian population in Iraq, and in particular, on children, women, and the most underprivileged population sectors, decides, to appeal to the international community as a whole ... to facilitate the supply of food and medicines to the civilian population".

2. The non-governmental organizations, concerned about the humanitarian situation in Iraq, forwarded an appeal to the Sub-Commission in August 1992 to draw its attention to the serious violations of human rights as a result of the blockade, which have since become aggravated, appeals once more with other organizations, to the esteemed Commission on Human Rights at its forty-ninth session to shoulder its responsibilities towards this serious situation:

> "Proceeding from the principles enshrined in the World Declaration on Human Rights and the provisions of the International Covenants on Human Rights, particularly those related to the right to life and economic, social and cultural rights, the undersigned non-governmental organizations wish to recall that the economic blockade imposed upon the people of Iraq still exists, despite the fact that the reasons that motivated the Security Council to justify its imposition no longer exist.
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> "Reports by all humanitarian delegations all indicate that mortalities among children have been increasing fourfold yearly as a result of this blockade which is leaving its physiological and psychological effects on the surviving children and other sections of the population due to the shortages of medicine and foodstuffs as well as other basic commodities such as stationery and sanitary cleansing material."

Epidemics have broken out in some Iraqi areas as a result of the total destruction of the infrastructure and the lack of material and equipment that is necessary for water purification and prevention of epidemics. These materials are still subjected to an iniquitous interpretation of the Security Council resolutions, such as some medicines that contain chemical material, detergents, fertilizers, stationery and optical lenses ... etc.

The special envoy of Le Monde wrote in the newspaper's issue of 4 February 1993 the following: "People are not dying of starvation, thanks to the rationing system and the rationing voucher issued by the Government, through which the Government provides 60 per cent of each individual's basic needs almost free of charge. This system allows each citizen a monthly acquirement of 9 kg of flour, 2.75 kg of rice, 1.5 kg of sugar, 500 grams of cooking oil, a little quantity of tea, a piece of soap and some detergents, which provides him with the means of survival, but not a normal living. Malnutrition is on the increase. We have found cases of paralysis and disability which became totally extinct in Iraq as affirmed by a UNICEF representative." The envoy also indicated increasing rates of corruption and

crime which were non-existent in the Iraqi society prior to the blockade, and add "The more serious situation is the lack of medicine. Today, Iraq receives merely 10 per cent out of the quantities it used to receive before the war including the humanitarian assistance. Hospitals operate at half its capacity and surgeons conduct urgent operations only because of the lack of material."

This blockade also affects the limited income sections of the society, particularly salary earners in the State and private sectors. Shortages of equipment and raw material causes unemployment and inflation at the same time. The inflation has reached more than 2000 per cent since two years; which also causes the disruption of construction, which, otherwise, could provide immense work opportunities.

Depriving Iraq of its production means and of utilizing its natural wealth subjects the population to inhumane conditions. The destruction of Iraq's infrastructure constitutes a violation of the Charter of the United Nations (since not all peaceful means have been exhausted: Article 1, paragraph 3 of the Charter and section 6 therein. It has gone beyond the stipulation set out in the United Nations resolutions. Security Council resolution 678 which authorized the use of "all means" with a view to implementing the previous resolutions did not envisage the destruction of Iraq's infrastructure).

On the other hand, most members of the Security Council admit that Iraq has fulfilled most of the provisions of the United Nations resolutions since the ceasefire, whereas we find that the blockade has not alleviated the suffering of the Iraqi people, even to the smallest extent. This interpretation of the United Nations resolutions is inconsistent with the spirit of the Charter which aims at promoting peace among nations.

Consequently, the undersigned non-governmental organizations ask the Commission at its forty-ninth session to take into consideration the serious violations of human rights due to the blockade imposed upon Iraq and to act in whatever manner under its jurisdiction to lift this iniquitous blockade whose victims are primarily the civilian population of Iraq, and to take, as a first step, the appropriate decision in this respect.